

Mental Illness Commitments

418.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This procedure describes an officer's duties when a person is to be committed to a mental health unit pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code § 5150. The commitment of a person under § 5150 does not constitute an arrest. If an officer believes that a person falls within the provisions of Welfare and Institutions Code § 5150, he/she shall transport that person to the designated facility for evaluation and commitment.

418.2 AUTHORITY

Pursuant to Welfare and Institution Code § 5150 when any person, as a result of mental disorder, is a danger to others, or to himself or herself, or gravely disabled, a peace officer, or other individual authorized by statute may, upon probable cause, take, or cause to be taken, the person into custody and place him or her in a facility designated by the county and approved by the State Department of Mental Health as a facility for 72-hour treatment and evaluation.

Such facility shall require an application in writing stating the circumstances under which the person's condition was called to the attention of the officer, or other individual authorized by statute has probable cause to believe that the person is, as a result of mental disorder, a danger to others, or to himself or herself, or gravely disabled. If the probable cause is based on the statement of a person other than the officer, or other individual authorized by statute, such person shall be informed that they may be liable in a civil action for intentionally giving a statement which he or she knows to be false.

418.3 OFFICER CONSIDERATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Any officer responding to or handling a call involving a suspected mentally disabled individual or an involuntary mental illness commitment should consider utilizing the following as time and circumstances reasonably permit:

- (a) Any available information that might assist in determining the cause and nature of the mental illness or developmental disability.
- (b) Conflict resolution and de-escalation techniques.
- (c) Language that is appropriate for interacting with a mentally disabled person.
- (d) If circumstances permit, alternatives to deadly force.
- (e) Any available community resources that can assist in dealing with a mentally disabled individual.

418.3.1 TRANSPORTATION

When transporting any individual for a "5150" commitment, the handling officer should have the Communications Center notify the receiving facility of the estimated time of arrival, the level of cooperation of the patient and whether or not any special medical care is needed.

Officers may transport patients in the patrol unit and shall secure them in accordance with the handcuffing policy. Violent patients or those that are medically unstable may be restrained and transported by ambulance and ambulance personnel. The officer will escort the patient into the facility and place that person in a designated treatment room as

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directed by a staff member. As soon as a security staff member becomes available, he/she should relieve the officer and physically remain in the treatment room with the patient.

418.3.2 RESTRAINTS

If the patient is violent or potentially violent, the officer will notify the staff of this concern. The staff member in charge will have discretion as to whether soft-restraints will be used. If these restraints are desired, the officer will wait while they are being applied to help provide physical control of the patient, if needed.

418.3.3 MENTAL HEALTH DOCUMENTATION

The officer will complete an Application For 72-Hour Detention for Evaluation and Treatment form (MH-302) and provide it to the staff member assigned to that patient. The officer will retain a copy of the 72-hour evaluation for inclusion in the case report. The officer shall also provide a verbal summary to an emergency department staff member regarding the circumstances leading to the involuntary detention.

418.3.4 SECURING OF WEAPONS

If a receiving and secured facility prohibits weapons or if an extraordinary event occurs in the treatment facility and officers determine a need to secure their firearms, the firearm shall be secured in the appropriate gun locker at the facility or in the police unit.

418.4 MENTALLY ILL PERSON CHARGED WITH A CRIME

When practical, if a person has committed a crime, and they appear to be mentally ill, that person shall be booked at the Fullerton Police Department before being transported to a treatment facility. If the suspect has injuries or some other medical condition, he/she may be taken directly to the hospital with the approval of a supervisor. If a criminal charge is pending, the officer should take necessary steps to make sure the hospital staff contacts the Watch Commander, regarding the expected time of releasing the patient. The Watch Commander will evaluate the necessity of taking custody of the patient and take appropriate steps to return the patient into custody for pending criminal charges.

If the offense is of a serious nature, the suspect may be booked into the Orange County Jail as directed by the Watch Commander or a supervisor.

418.5 CONFISCATION OF FIREARMS AND OTHER WEAPONS

Whenever a person has been detained or apprehended for examination pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code § 5150, the handling officer should seek to determine if the person owns or has access to any firearm or other deadly weapon. Any such firearm or other deadly weapon should be confiscated in a manner consistent with current search and seizure law (Welfare and Institutions Code § 8102(a)).

Officers are cautioned that a search warrant may be needed before entering a residence or other place to search unless lawful, warrantless entry has already been made (e.g., exigent circumstances, valid consent) (Penal Code § 1524).

For purposes of this section, deadly weapon means any weapon, the possession of which or carrying while concealed, is prohibited by Penal Code § 19100; 21310.

The officer taking custody of any firearm or other deadly weapon shall issue the individual possessing such weapon a receipt, fully describing the weapon (including any serial

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number) and indicating the location where the weapon may be recovered, along with any applicable time limit for recovery (Penal Code § 33800).

The handling officer shall further advise the person of the below described procedure described below for the return of any firearm or other deadly weapon which that has been confiscated (Welfare and Institutions Code § 8102(a)). For purposes of this section deadly weapon means any weapon that the possession of or carrying while concealed is prohibited by Penal Code § 19100; 21310.

418.5.1 RETURN OF CONFISCATED FIREARMS AND WEAPONS

- (a) Whenever the handling officer has cause to believe that the future return of any confiscated weapon(s) might endanger the person or others, the officer shall detail those facts and circumstances in a report. The report shall be forwarded to the Detective Bureau which shall be responsible for initiating a petition to the superior court for a hearing in accordance with Welfare and Institutions Code § 8102(b), to determine whether or not the weapon(s) will be returned.
- (b) The petition to the Superior Court shall be initiated within 30 days of the release of the individual from whom such weapon(s) have been confiscated unless the Department makes an ex parte application to the court to extend the time to file such a petition, up to a maximum of 60 days. At the time any such petition is initiated, the Department shall send written notice to the individual informing him or her of the right to a hearing on the issue and that he or she has 30 days to confirm with the court clerk any desire for a hearing and that the failure to do so will result in the forfeiture of any confiscated weapon(s).
- (c) If no petition is initiated within the above period, the Department shall make the weapon(s) available for return in accordance with subsection (d) below. If the person does not confirm a desire for a hearing within the prescribed 30 days, the Department may file a petition for an order of default.
- (d) Under no circumstances shall any firearm be returned to any individual unless and until such person presents valid identification and written notification from the California Department of Justice which conforms to the provisions of Penal Code § 33865.
- (e) In no case in which a firearm or other deadly weapon is not retained as evidence shall the Department be required to retain such firearms or other deadly weapon longer than 180 days after notice has been provided to the owner that such firearm or other deadly weapon is available for return. At the expiration of such period, the firearm or other deadly weapon may be processed for disposal in accordance with applicable law (Penal Code § 33875).

418.6 TRAINING

As a part of advanced officer training programs, this agency will endeavor to include POST approved training on interaction with mentally disabled persons as provided by Penal Code § 13515.25.

418.7 EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Each facility has varying degrees of services and not all will have available security personnel. However, most treatment facilities will attempt to relieve the transporting officer quickly.

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The on-duty Emergency Department physician will assess the patient and coordinate further treatment with the facilities' Psychiatric Unit. If the facility does not have an available psychiatric treatment the officer should coordinate with the staff to arrange for an inter-hospital transfer so the officer would not be required to remain with the patient.

If the officer feels that he/she is being unnecessarily delayed at the facility a staff supervisor should be contacted to resolve the delay. If the officer and the staff are unable to resolve the situation a field supervisor shall be notified regarding the circumstances. Specific difficulties requiring administrative action should be documented and forwarded to the Professional Standards Bureau Sergeants for further investigation.